

Application No. 10/090,668

Attorney Docket No. PU010115

REMARKS

Claims 1-5 and 7-17 are pending in this application with claims 1, 3, 5, 7-9, 11-12, 16 and 17 being amended.

Claims 1, 3, 5, 7-9, 11-12, 16 and 17 have been amended for purposes of clarity to recite "specific television program". Support for this amendment can be found in original claim 3 and thus it is respectfully submitted that no new issues are raised by this amendment.

Rejection of Claims 1-4, 5, 7-17 under 35 USC § 103(a)

Claims 1-3, 5, 7-8, and 15-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Abecassis (U.S. Patent No. 5,684,918) in view of Wugofski (U.S. Patent No. 6,704,028 B2).

The present claimed invention recites a method and apparatus for selectively controlling access to programs. In order to control access, a rating limit corresponding to a first user input and an exception to the rating limit corresponding to a second user input are set. Information for identifying a program and for specifying a rating of the program is received and compared with the stored rating limit. It is then determined whether an exception to the rating limit has been set for the program identified by the received program identifying information. Access to the program is controlled in response to the results of the steps of comparing and determining. The exceptions from said rating limits define programs which shall be blocked or enabled independently to the set rating limits.

Abecassis discloses a video on demand system. In this system, a user is able to selectively view a video. The viewing of this video is subject to preset content preferences for the user. However, as admitted by the Examiner, Abecassis neither discloses nor suggests that "exceptions from said rating limits define programs which

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 shall be blocked or enabled independently to said set rating limits" as in the present
 claimed invention.

Wugofski discloses a convergence system suitable for accepting inputs from several television or personal computing sources and output the sources on a display. The convergence system is controlled by a multi-function controller suitable for providing a set of function commands. Contrary to the assertion of the Examiner, Wugofski, similarly to Abecassis, neither discloses nor suggests that "exceptions from said rating limits define programs which shall be blocked or enabled independently to said set rating limits" as in the present claimed invention. In the convergence system of Wugofski, there is no need to provide exceptions from the rating limits as programs provided for viewing are specifically selected by the user prior to viewing. The Examiner contends that Abecassis does not clearly show the step of "wherein said exceptions from said rating limits define programs which shall be blocked or enabled independently to said set rating limits"; however, Wugofski teaches that the user can customize setting the rating control limit which defines whether programs with associated contents and time can be blocked, unblocked or enabled independently to the set rating limits so that some or all program contents can be regarded as some exceptions can be performed independently to the set rating limits. It is further contended in the Office Action that Wugofski "allows the user to select the limits of predetermined content thresholds for the viewer indicated in the profile" and "the user may select limits in terms of 'ratings' assigned to programs, in terms of the program content, or both" as described in column 6, lines 54-59. Wugofski, however, similarly to Abecassis, neither discloses nor suggests "setting an exception to said rating limit corresponding to a second user input" as in the present claimed invention. Additionally, Wugofski (with Abecassis), neither discloses nor suggests "determining whether an exception to said rating limit has been set for said specific television program identified by said received program identifying information", as in the present claimed invention. The Examiner contends that by allowing a user to set rating control limits which define whether programs with associated contents and time can be blocked, unblocked or enabled independently to the set rating limits, that some or all program contents can be regarded as some exception that can be performed independently to the set rating limits.

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The applicant respectfully disagrees. In the situation where a user chooses to block out television programs of a certain rating limit, the present invention allows the user to set an exception to unblock a specific television program for viewing. For instance, if a user sets the rating limit to block all programs rated above TV-PG, but would like to view a specific television program rated TV-14, the user can add the program to a Never Block Program List. The user would not be required to be present and to enter a password to unblock the system for viewing when that specific television program is aired. The details of this process are presented in steps 32 to 34 on page 12, lines 10-21. A user would not be able to perform the same function under either Abecassis or Wugofski, when taken alone or in combination. The Examiner suggests that the user could set time limit exceptions to allow access for certain durations during certain times of the day. This, however, is not the same as the present invention. By setting a time limit exception where the program block is disabled for a certain period, the user is allowed to access television programs of all ratings at that time. In the present claimed invention, the user chooses a specific television program to allow while blocking the rest of the programs that exceed the predetermined rating setting. Since present claimed invention checks whether each individual television program is included on the Always Block or Never Block Program List as detailed on page 11, line 29 to page 12, line 21, even if the program time is changed, the present claimed invention will block or allow the appropriate program accordingly.

In view of the above remarks to the claims, it is respectfully submitted that Abecassis and Wugofski, when taken alone or in combination, provide no 35 USC § 112 compliant enabling disclosure showing the above discussed features. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that Abecassis and Wugofski, when taken alone or in combination, do not make the present invention as claimed in Independent Claims 1 and 17 unpatentable. As Claims 2, 3, 5, 7, 8 and 15 are dependant on Claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that these claims are also allowable for the same reasons discussed above. It is thus respectfully submitted that these rejections are satisfied and should be withdrawn.

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Rejection of Claims 4 and 16 under 35 USC § 103(a)

Claims 4 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Abecassis (U.S. Patent No. 5,684,918) in view of Wugofski as in claim 1 and further view of Aras et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,872,588).

Aras discloses a method and apparatus for content coding of audio/visual materials. The content coding can be decoded by a home station where the content coding is collected and processed. However, Aras, similarly to Abecassis and Wugofski, neither discloses nor suggests "setting an exception to said rating limit corresponding to a second user input" as in the present claimed invention. Additionally, Aras (with Abecassis and Wugofski), neither discloses nor suggests "determining whether an exception to said rating limit has been set for said specific television program identified by said received program identifying information", as in the present claimed invention.

In view of the above remarks to the claim, it is respectfully submitted that Abecassis, Wugofski and Aras, when taken alone or in any combination, provide no 35 USC § 112 compliant enabling disclosure showing the above discussed features. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that any combination of Abecassis, Wugofski and Aras does not make the present invention as claimed in Claims 1 and 16 upatentable. As Claim 4 is dependant on Claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 4 is also allowable for the same reasons discussed above. It is thus respectfully submitted that these rejections are satisfied and should be withdrawn.

Rejection of Claims 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 under 35 USC § 103(a)

Claims 9-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Abecassis (U.S. Patent No. 5,684,918) in view of Wugofski as in claim 1 and further view of Wood et al. (U.S. Pub. No. 2002/0054752 A1).

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Wood discloses a video data recordable having integrated channel guides allowing a user to control recording and storage of television signals into personal channels for later playback and viewing. However, Wood, similarly to Abecassis, and Wugofski, neither discloses nor suggests "setting an exception to said rating limit corresponding to a second user input" as in the present claimed invention. Additionally, Wood (with Abecassis and Wugofski), neither discloses nor suggests "determining whether an exception to said rating limit has been set for said specific television program identified by said received program identifying information", as in the present claimed invention.

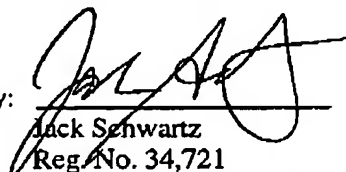
In view of the above remarks to the claim, it is respectfully submitted that Abecassis, Wugofski and Wood, when taken alone or in any combination, provides no 35 USC § 112 compliant enabling disclosure showing the above discussed features. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that any combination of Abecassis, Wugofski and Wood does not make the present invention as claimed in Claim 1 unpatentable. As Claims 9-14 are dependant on Claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that these claims are also allowable for the same reasons discussed above. It is thus respectfully submitted that these rejections are satisfied and should be withdrawn.

Having fully addressed the Examiner's rejections, it is believed that, in view of the preceding amendments and remarks, this application stands in condition for allowance. Accordingly then, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully solicited. If, however, the Examiner is of the opinion that such action cannot be taken, the Examiner is invited to contact the applicant's attorney at the phone number below, so that a mutually convenient date and time for a telephonic interview may be scheduled.

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